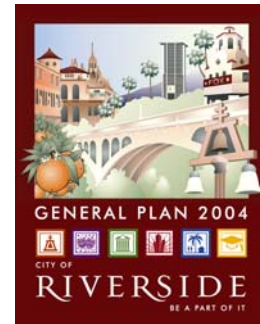


## **Riverside General Plan Program**

### **Kickoff Meeting Tuesday, April 22, 2003**



On Tuesday, April 22, 2003, City of Riverside Planning staff and the General Plan consultant team led by Cotton/Bridges/Associates and MIG held a General Plan Program Kickoff meeting. The meeting provided an opportunity to give key City staff an overview of the General Plan Program, and brainstorm community issues to be addressed in the Program.

The consultant team stated that the General Plan and supporting documents – the zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, and design guidelines - will build on City foundation initiatives completed to date, particularly the Vision Report, Housing economic studies, and the Strategic Plan. City staff was asked to identify how to best pursue the City's vision in the context of the following General Plan elements. Additional comments beyond those topics were also offered.

- A. Land Use and Urban Design
- B. Circulation and Mobility
- C. Housing
- D. Arts and Culture
- E. Education
- F. Public Safety
- G. Noise
- H. Open Space and Conservation
- I. Public Facilities and Infrastructure
- J. Parks and Recreation
- K. Cultural Resources

The comments of City staff are provided on the following pages. At the meeting, MIG staff graphically recorded the discussion. A copy of the meeting graphic is included at the end of this summary.

#### **Land Use and Urban Design**

- The City has a need for an upscale entertainment hub, a place where residents of different ages can gather.
- Riverside as a City faces a number of challenges: we have newer, upscale areas with little or no community facilities and older, poorer areas also with no facilities. Newer

communities have few parks or community centers because the City has required the developer to build them, and it will take a number of years to collect sufficient funds to finance the construction. Older areas such as Arlanza have no libraries and limited parks. The school is now the only center of the community.

- We need to create partnerships within existing facilities such as libraries/community centers to help fill this need.
- We need a stronger Downtown, a central place to gather and hang out.
- Measure C and Proposition R limit and restrict development in the community and within the Sphere of Influence. We need policies on how to better implement Measure C and Proposition R.
- Riverside can be divided into four quadrants with distinct foci and character.
  - The northwest is the “body” culture interested in horseback riding, golf, and other pursuits.
  - The southwest is the “spiritual” quadrant. Residents are interested in wide open spaces and peaceful activities such as gardening and walking. Privacy is of high importance.
  - The northeast embodies the “mind” culture. This includes UCR students and teachers and persons interested in digital technology, foreign films, and global issues.
  - The southeast quadrant encompasses Downtown and long-established neighborhoods and institutions. This is the “cauldron of the imagination” where a mixture of different ideas and opportunities such as music, ballet, and other arts coalesce. This is where all other cultures come together.
  - It is important to remember that these activities and interests are not mutually exclusive; pieces of each exist within each quadrant.
- The use of fencing is of concern. Some fences are used for safety, others for aesthetic purposes. Fencing type influences neighborhood character. We need more consistency.

## **Circulation and Mobility**

- The City needs to address two key traffic issues: 1) regional traffic along the 91 freeway and 2) perceived local traffic problems. In general, traffic isn’t really as bad as people think it is, but traffic will get worse.
- We need to strike a balance between land use and roadway capacity. We cannot make everyone use the same road.

- Metro-link and RTA are not completely effective in solving our traffic problems
- We need to come up with some realistic housing and land development options that reduce traffic.
- We should remember to create a “sense of place” for Riverside as viewed from the freeways. One should be aware and have a positive feeling when traveling to or through Riverside. This can be achieved through better landscaping and entry features.
- Roundabouts are an interesting traffic concept we should explore. Other cities have used them successfully as traffic-calming devices.

## **Housing**

- We should look at smaller lot housing and higher densities near transit centers.
- We need to preserve the character of our neighborhoods.

## **Arts and Culture**

- The Santa Ana River is good resource and asset. The river could be incorporated more into community design and art.
- Riverside needs to find its niche. We don't have a beach or a desert so we have to find our core - something to market. We have a lot of different activities and lifestyles such as horseback riding. We just need to promote these activities more.

## **Education**

- We have a town/gown clash regarding student housing and lifestyles. We have 50,000 university and college students in the City.
- We need more student housing and more transit options for students.
- We need to invest in our K-12 schools. Good schools attract executives and high tech workers.

## **Public Safety**

- The City has a fire sprinkler ordinance which has helped address fire hazards in the community.
- Fire codes establish different loading and fire standards for different types of businesses (e.g., office versus light industrial). New developments should plan ahead

and meet fire access standard for any type of business to accommodate a broad range of future tenants.

- A lot of tension exists among the various cultural groups in the City. This has resulted in violence and recent shootings.
- Police Department resources are stretched. As the City spreads out, response times increase.
- We need to look at the past types of development that have strained our police resources
- Some areas and groups are taxing our resources, chilling the image of the City.
- A potential conflict exists between allowing development in the Sphere of Influence and maintaining adequate emergency response times. We need more police and fire stations if we are to develop within the Sphere of Influence.
- Train traffic hinders with emergency response. Increased use of existing rails must be accounted for in emergency response planning.
- We should remember the impact of the Sphere of Influence. A lot of development approved by the County has occurred within the Sphere. People come here and spend money and use our services. This impacts our resources, but we also want to make sure they feel safe here.
- The SAFE program in the east end of town has been successful. The police, schools, and church have worked with residents to help reduce crime.

### **Public Facilities/Infrastructure**

- We need to attract high technology jobs and workers. We should design a high technology infrastructure into business and residential development.
- Some neighborhoods we need to preserve. For others, a more appropriate focus is revitalization and rehabilitation.
- Many of our public facilities are outdated, including our historic ones such as fire stations. We have enough public facilities, but need new ones must replace olds ones that have become obsolete.
- We should establish a nexus fee system that will help fund facility upgrades such as new police and fire departments. Each new development will pay into the fund depending on type and size of the proposed project.
- We need more decentralization of facilities and to provide more support to outlying neighborhoods.

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## **Open Space /Recreation**

- We need to integrate the Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan into our planning efforts. Our plans should recognize potential wildlife corridors that are valuable.
- Some of our policies to preserve open space have not worked. For example, Proposition R has reduced density levels in certain areas. But many people build mansion-size homes using all of the lot area. We would be better off if we could add to Proposition R and have clustering options to produce smaller homes on smaller lots with more open space.
- We should capitalize on using our hiking/biking trails and paths as a community asset.

## **Communication**

- Riverside needs to face the reality that we are transitioning from a rural/suburban city to an urban environment. We need to embrace and promote this reality and not be saddened by it.
- We need to help foster a sense of community pride. When residents have a sense of pride, they help maintain the community.
- We need to change our communication with residents and explore different methods of engaging the public.

## **Zoning**

- Our zoning ordinance is now one standard. However, it would be useful to have different standards for each neighborhood.
- We have special zoning standards for Downtown. We should recognize that other areas of the City are just as unique.

## **Economic**

- We need to look at financing in a holistic way. How much will it cost to produce new facilities? How will we generate the financing?
- Redevelopment Agency Plans needs to be an important part of the General Plan. Currently 15% of the City's area lies within a redevelopment area. This will increase to include significantly more of the community.
- We should combine arts and culture with economic development.
- High fees may discourage new development. Instead, we should provide incentives for facilities and good design.

## General Comments

- We need to make hard decisions about Proposition R and Measure C. Is the time ripe to revisit these policy documents?
- We have a lot of outstanding resources. The Parks and Recreation Department maintains a trails system and has a bus service.
- Why is there no financial or legal element of the General Plan?
- We need to help other agencies in the City develop their facilities and not treat other branches like an outside agency. We need more interdepartmental cooperation.
- We have a lot of bulky trash in private vacant lots. How do we remove all this?
- The General Plan should include good findings and a lot of detail. The Plan needs to contain substance to allow for decisions and policies. For example: We need to pursue joint use facilities because of fiscal and neighborhood needs.
- What is the soul of Riverside, and how can we express it in the General Plan.